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**THE EMERGING CAMPAIGN FOR
US TROOP REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE:
SIREN CALL TO DISASTER.**



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STRATEGIC ISSUES RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

10 Henry G. Gale

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**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania**

**THE EMERGING CAMPAIGN FOR
US TROOP REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE:
SIREN CALL TO DISASTER**

by

Henry G. Gole

15 June 1981

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FOREWORD

The author of this memorandum contends that reduction of US troop strength in Europe in the near future would be a mistake. He argues that the reasons for having a US presence there is as valid for the 1980's as it was in the 1950's and 1960's: to deter Soviet aggression and to prop up Europe—because it is in the interest of the United States to do so. The memorandum concludes that pulling US troops from Europe to establish a strategic reserve for worldwide contingencies would destabilize Europe and signal US decline as a world power.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

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JACK N. MERRITT
Major General, USA
Commandant

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HENRY G. GOLE is a Strategic Research Analyst with the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. He is a graduate of Hofstra University and holds master's degrees in education from Hofstra; in history and politics from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University; and in German history from Stanford University. Colonel Gole was the Assistant Army Attaché in Bonn from 1973 to 1977, and he subsequently taught European history for three years at the US Military Academy. Colonel Gole's career has also included three previous tours in Germany, two tours in Vietnam, and enlisted service in Korea during the Korean War. He has published numerous articles in *Military Review*, *Army*, *The Marine Corps Gazette* and *The Army Times*.

SUMMARY

The need for a mobile strategic reserve capable of responding to contingencies around the world has caused military planners and defense intellectuals to reconsider current US troop levels in Europe. European attitudes regarding security issues tend to complicate the matter as a pro-defense impulse in the United States contrasts sharply with a more benign European approach to defense. The inclination of Americans to accuse NATO Europe of not doing enough may cause us to forget that we are in Europe in the American national interest. The American voice is at times petulant and at times strident as it threatens a reduction of US forces in Europe and demands that Europe do more for defense.

Our reasons for being in Europe in the 1980's are as valid as they were in the 1950's and 1960's: to deter Soviet aggression and to prop up Europe. Pulling US troops out of Europe in the near future would risk European stability and give the appearance that the United States is a declining power unready to stay the course. It would tempt Europe to be more accommodating to the Soviet Union and convince Marxists-Leninists everywhere that the capitalist system is, indeed, falling of its own weight as predicted in Communist theology.

The maintenance of equilibrium in Europe remains an essential component of world order and stability. US troops are required to play their role in maintaining peace in Europe, and the need for them at the end of the decade will probably be more or less what it was at the beginning of the 1980's. The temptation to find a strategic reserve in Europe should be resisted. Strategic flexibility should not be bought at the price of risking security in Europe.

THE EMERGING CAMPAIGN FOR US TROOP REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE: SIREN CALL TO DISASTER

US defense policy proceeds from the assumption that we have a vital interest in preserving the independence of NATO Europe, a region second in strategic importance only to the United States itself. The paramount elements of strategy in Europe are to deter war, to maintain stability where NATO and Warsaw Pact forces confront one another, and to prevent a successful Soviet blitzkrieg by being prepared to fight if necessary. The purpose of stationing US troops in Europe in the difficult years after World War II was to give physical evidence of stated strategy. Whether called "containment" or "forward defense" the message to friends and enemies was clear: the United States had drawn a line which could be crossed only at risk of war. The United States was committed to the defense of Europe. While feelings of kinship or compassion played a role in policy formulation, it was in the US interest to insure that Europe would not be dominated by the Soviet Union. It continues to be in the US interest to assure that independence of NATO Europe. If policy is to be more than posturing, if strategy is to be more than empty rhetoric, forces in place must match pronounced intent.

Thus far the strategy has worked. It is perfectly reasonable to ask if the strategy might have worked as well with one less US brigade or division. Less reasonable would be the actual withdrawal of brigades or divisions to discover the precise point at which troop reduction will cause our strategy to fail. That information would be useful to some future historian, but it would offer little solace to the United States to have discovered that critical point.

In the past decade US ground combat strength in Europe has actually increased. One might ask why it is necessary to argue for the maintenance of those forces as though a threat to their continued presence exists. The answer is based upon an estimate that a combination of trends and perceptions is already underway which will result in serious challenges to maintaining US troops in Europe at near-current levels. Among these trends and perceptions are: American charges that Europeans fail to do their share in the common defense; the need for a US strategic reserve owing to American acceptance of general responsibility for Western interests in the Persian Gulf; policy differences that separate Europe and the United States; the inclination by Western Europe to be more accommodating to the Soviet Union.¹ This incomplete list fails to take into account yet unknown points of friction certain to arise in our relationship to Europe in the future.

The cyclical recurrence of pressures to reduce US strength in Europe peaked last in the early 1970's under the leadership of Senator Mansfield. Pressures receded primarily because unilateral reductions made little sense once we entered into the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Vienna. It was hoped that even limited agreement would find reduction of Warsaw Pact forces matching, in some proportion, US reductions. Events in the Persian Gulf will drive the next cycle of pressures to get US troops out of Europe for use elsewhere. At this moment voices may be muted, but the issue can be expected to resurface soon at the policy level.

THE SIREN CALL

There is a real problem associated with documenting the "muted voices" proposing US troop reduction in Europe, not because sources do not exist, but because sources refuse to be cited as they fly in the face of current official policy. Unpublished papers

written by defense officials in key positions exist, but they are not for attribution. The tip of the iceberg is visible, however, in some cautious comments by US public officials and "sources" cited in the press. "Division of labor" and "burden-sharing" are becoming code words for a diminished US role in Europe. Oblique differences and trial balloons abound.

The Army is also said to have concluded that in 15 years or so, American forces could be withdrawn from Western Europe and the Persian Gulf area would thus become the most important priority for the United States.²

The United States must put it to the Western Alliance frankly: if American units are to stay in Europe, then Europe must be ready to join in an economic boycott of the Soviet Union if it invades Poland. No nation can be permitted to profit from America's economic response to aggression without taking the loss of American protection.³

Jack Anderson reported that his associate, Dale Van Atta, uncovered a secret, 35-page report written by Admiral Harry Train, "head of the US Atlantic Command," and former deputy defense secretary Robert Ellsworth, advocating "an almost total US withdrawal from Europe as a move that offers 'the best prospects for the future'." Anderson's article concludes:

The authors recommend that the United States withdraw all but a 'small U.S. force' from Europe, making up for this pullout by a promise of quick military backup in the event of a Soviet attack. This would free the limited American military strength for use elsewhere in the world, encourage a credible European nuclear deterrent—and, of course, be popular with budgetcutters at home.

The possibility that the Russians would 'react aggressively' if the United States pulled out, or the Western European nations might 'run to Moscow,' were discounted by Train and Ellsworth as unlikely.⁴

The Washington Monthly, December 1980,⁵ carried a piece by George Ott, a retired professor and frequent contributor to *Armed Forces Journal*, under the title "The Case Against NATO." A few excerpts convey Mr. Ott's message:

This year nearly one-half of our defense budget—more than \$81 billion—will not be spent on American defense at all. It will be spent to defend our North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies in Europe. That is, it will be presented as a gift to countries rich and powerful enough to defend themselves.

The alternative is to withdraw our soldiers and money from NATO and to return the burden of defending Europe to the Europeans, the ones who enjoy its benefits.

This is not suggest that Europe is in no danger from the Soviet Union. But that danger is nowhere near as great as many assume, and nothing that European NATO cannot handle on its own, if it is willing to apply its size and resources at a reasonable level.

Similarly, our vast defense subsidies to Europe are a primary cause of U.S. inflation. Meanwhile, West Germany and Japan in particular avoid inflation by spending a mere fraction of what we spend on defense.

The result, General James M. Gavin noted in 1967, is that 'the very existence' of American forces in NATO 'acts in a manner inimical to the long-term military interests of Europe'. By this he meant that Europe has become lazy, all too happy to wallow in our subsidies and remain inherently weak. Announcing the withdrawal of American troops and subsidies from NATO would awaken Europeans to their need to be responsible for themselves, and perhaps give impetus to the continent's political and military integration, enhancing its overall security.

An independent, European-financed NATO would also alter the global balance of power in a positive fashion. It would create a third superpower, ending the precarious bipolar balance of terror in which every development can be viewed as a US-Soviet showdown.

The editors of *The Washington Monthly* endorse Mr. Ott's thesis and probably reflect a view widely held among the public and in government in these words under the lead: "We'll Stay If They Pay."

The alternative to withdrawing from NATO this magazine has endorsed in the past is to make the allies pay. Charge them \$81.1 billion for protection. Sidle up to Helmut Schmidt and Margaret Thatcher and say, 'Nice little continent you have here. Too bad if anything should happen to it'. Tell them we've had it with current subsidy arrangement, which made sense after the war, but is crazy now that Europe is healthy and wealthy once more. Offer them the choice: either we pull out, forcing them to defend themselves, or they pick up the tab. Eighty-one billion a year direct to the U.S. Treasury, please don't send stamps.'

An official at the elbow of defense policymakers prefers not to be named, but the following are among his recommendations in a circulated but unpublished paper:

First, a five-to-ten year troop withdrawal plan should be negotiated between the United States and its European allies . . .

Second, the United States should give up its sector in southern Germany and integrate the two remaining American divisions into the European force structures

Third, the United States should relinquish the position of SACEUR and other key positions within the NATO Command

The author qualifies the terms of American withdrawal from Europe and concludes: "Twelfth, American policymakers must accept an end to American preeminence and a more equal European role in the decisionmaking processes of the Alliance."

Two recently published European views suggest that Europe has begun to plan for a European defense either without US conventional forces or in a vastly changed relationship to them. Jean-Paul Pigasse, writing in *Strategic Review*, sets aside "the political obstacles on the road toward a purely European defense system" in an interesting article assessing the "objective" factors which could make Europe an independent third force in the world power equation. He concludes: "The thrust of this analysis has been to demonstrate that Europe can, if it so desires, ensure its security with the resources at its disposal. The issue is one of political choice and political will."⁷ His case is nicely made, but it is precisely the political obstacles which require US troop presence in Europe for the coming decade to substitute for European political will.

The three French authors of *Euroshima*, Rene Cagnat, Guy Doly, and Pascal Fontaine, assert the need for Europe to assume defense initiatives formerly reserved for the United States.⁸ Both the Pigasse article and *Euroshima* press for a revitalized European Defense Community relatively immune to American influence.

The confluence of European desire for independence and the American need for a strategic reserve will produce strong pressures to take some US troops out of Europe early in the 1980's. To date, only the diversion of reinforcements are under discussion. Stationed US troops, one fears, will be next.⁹

This is not to suggest that NATO is immutable. Changes within NATO are certainly possible, and there will come a day when NATO, like all human institutions, will have outlived its usefulness. That time is not now. Major shifts of US troops from Europe will require a climate characterized by European willingness to do more for defense and one in which the United

States is viewed as a strong and determined leader of the alliance. If either condition is not met, withdrawal of US troops will be viewed as evidence of US decline. The impatient assertion that simply pulling US troops out of Europe would force Europeans to take up their own defense is myopic. One possible consequence of such a precipitous act could be that desired: NATO Europe might fill the gap created by the deployment of US troops elsewhere. But there are other possible and less desirable consequences: a drift to the East, a loss of faith in America.

THE EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP

American assistance to Europe after World War II played the key role in the rapid restoration of economic health on the Continent and in the international system. In due course, economic, political, and security factors became almost inseparable as a classical power struggle took on the trappings of ideological conflict. America took the lead in the West, and changes in any of these factors affected all members of what became known as the Atlantic Community.

The revival of Europe brought with it a restored sense of confidence and self-assertion which can be welcomed as perfectly natural or viewed with suspicion, depending upon one's predisposition. Certainly Western Europe was more easily led when climbing out of the debris of World War II, in effect a ward of the United States. That relationship has changed. The more sanguine view of European recovery stresses the naturalness of the evolution toward normal relations between states and the capability of Europe to carry its fair share of the defense burden. The independence of sovereign Western European nations might also tend to normalize relations between East and West with the states of Middle Europe leading the way. The Federal Republic of Germany's Ostpolitik in 1970 resulted in the Moscow Treaty signed in the Kremlin on 12 August of that year, a milestone in Europe's postwar history. That treaty paved the way for the nonaggression and normalization treaties with the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The admission of both German states to the United Nations and the agreements at Helsinki (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE]), can also be seen as milestones in the process of normalizing affairs between European states and legitimizing existing frontiers.

There is a more pessimistic view. Western Europe could drift beyond independence to ties with the East that could bind in a manner more advantageous to the Soviet Union than to the West. Detente and Ostpolitik have allowed for increased trade and the movement of people between East and West—resulting in, for example, increased reliance upon Soviet gas in Western Europe. The United States can reduce trade with the Soviet Union in a relatively painless manner, Western European countries would find the end of detente a more wrenching experience in economic terms and in the psychic impact of the tension bound to accompany a return to something like confrontation politics in Europe.

Relative economic strengths and vulnerabilities are now recognized as being as vital to the health of the Atlantic Alliance as military and diplomatic factors. World trade, energy, food, raw materials, and the world monetary system concern nations as much as the military balance. The potential for competition among allies exists in the form of a race for raw materials and influence in the Third World. Such a race could combine with other economic realities—inflation and unemployment—to compel Western politicians to respond in a shortsighted manner, already an inclination given their relatively short tenure in power. The temptation to affront an ally may appear more attractive to elected officials than facing an unhappy electorate. Protectionism waits in the wings on call as disputes among governments arise. These are bread and butter issues to be ignored by politicians at their own risk.¹⁰ The three decades after World War II saw unprecedented economic growth and almost full employment in Western Europe. There are signs that a period of stagnation and resultant unemployment may be in the cards in the 1980's. West European economies are increasingly challenging American domination of the high technology field and areas such as civilian long-haul aircraft production, formerly an almost purely American preserve. Europeans might lash out at the United States for "mismanagement" of the world's economy in a period of hard times. Economic resentment could spill over to security considerations in the coming decade and test relations within NATO.

Doubts about the strength and resolve of the United States are being expressed. US strength and determination attracted allies in the post-World War II years as the best vehicle for the realization

of European interests. The combination of awe, respect, and admiration enjoyed then has been declining steadily. Events since the 1960's have eroded the general feeling on the part of Europeans that America can do anything, that America is the land of unlimited possibilities and the very backbone of the West. The reservoir of confidence and trust in the United States resides in a generation which will be passing from the scene in the next decade, and leadership will be assumed by those whose memories of the Marshall Plan and the Berlin airlift are less clear. One senses a mood in Europe that asks if the United States is a declining power, one unwilling to stay the course. Friends, foes, and those sitting on the fence wonder at the apparent "inability of the United States' political system—its policies, leadership and institutions—to arrest its slide."¹¹ We pose a problem for Europeans: they sense our potential and suspect our will.

To understand European temporizing when demands are placed upon Europe by Washington requires some sense of this mood as Europeans reconsider the connection with America in the 1980's. The lukewarm European support for strong countermeasures proposed by the United States in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the mixed European reaction to the boycott of the Moscow Olympics are manifestations of the increasing willingness to question American leadership of the West.¹² The desire to pursue detente in Europe, a policy beneficial to Western Europe and particularly beneficial to the Federal Republic of Germany, has introduced new language to diplomacy as we ask how divisible detente is. This takes us to the issue of the primacy of regional interests to Europeans versus the global interests of the United States.¹³ Is it possible to maintain detente in Europe in the face of Soviet nibbling on the "periphery" (as Europeans prefer to see extra-European issues), or must the United States cajole Europeans into playing an unwanted role outside of Europe? Similar questions could be raised regarding other diverging US-European policies: American desire to control nuclear proliferation clashes with incentives to Europeans to turn a handsome profit by exporting civilian nuclear plant and materials with possible military application; conflicting national policies regarding arms transfers to third nations divide, for example, France and the United States; human rights issues often collide with the need for strategic materials and unattractive partners; as

commerical ties between East and West in Europe increase, it may well be that Washington's call for the denial of strategic materials and high technology to the Soviet Union will fall on deaf ears as Europe places higher values on the here and now of economic profit than on an insurance policy. A clear need for coordination and a sign of US determination are required if Europe is to follow US leadership. Mixed signals from the United States would cause confusion in the alliance.

Nuclear trends and issues will almost certainly provide yet another opportunity for debate within the alliance. The US nonproliferation policy will collide with the profitable business enjoyed by some European nations in the transfer of technology to so-called Third World countries. The stationing of nuclear weapons and delivery systems is currently prohibited in some NATO lands and very unpopular in others where such weapons and systems are positioned.¹⁴ New capabilities and improved systems will be publicized and will be the occasions for future debates on domestic and international stages. The ambivalence of Europeans stems from a desire to live under the American nuclear umbrella while preferring that the US weapons be stored elsewhere, ideally in a neighbor's country. Nuclear facilities for peaceful use are regularly challenged by vocal citizen groups, so one can reasonably expect debate and protest to accompany the stationing of nuclear weapons systems in European countries, a sentiment not unknown in the United States, as citizens of Utah or Arkansas will testify.

The cultural, political, economic, and security ties that have long bound Europe and the United States promise to make a continued close relationship through the 1980's possible, but not certain. Changes in economic and security factors will complicate relationships, and preserving NATO will require imagination and willingness to accommodate alliance partners. One of the major changes will be the frequent intrusion of extra-European issues into Atlantic Alliance considerations. European interpretations of events in the Middle East and Southwest Asia will differ from those of the United States and are likely to strain relations between us and our allies. Another change will be the inclination by the junior partners of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact (WP) to be more assertive in dealing with their superpower allies. The tolerance of the Soviets and Americans will be tested as both Warsaw Pact and NATO member states tend to disengage themselves from US-Soviet

confrontations in Europe and around the globe. The smaller states of Central Europe will prefer the further cultivation of normal relations among themselves while enjoying the advantages of association with their superpower allies. The number of moving parts and independent wills involved make future relationships increasingly complex within blocs, between blocs and outside of Europe. A high level of sophistication and intelligence will be required to direct the main lines of US policy while avoiding the confusion of means and ends in this complex new environment of the 1980's.

Yet, buried in dire projections and dismal prospects lies a success story.¹⁵ Tales of woe are not new, but a kind of stability and equilibrium in Europe has evolved even while tensions and crises have succeeded one another almost without pause from the 1940's to the present. Regular tensions are unpleasant, but the ad hoc arrangements made over the last 35 years have contributed significantly to a modus vivendi quite out of keeping with the fractious behavior of Europeans in their long history. This has been possible for the most basic reason: the alignment in Europe reflects the reality of a power relationship. The USSR and the United States emerged from World War II as superpowers and attracted, one way or another, allies. The rough equivalence of the superpowers and the rough equivalence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact have made an attempt at hegemony by either side too risky to chance. The result has been a kind of a balance of power hoped for in the European past, but disrupted with some regularity as Spain, France, and Germany made their respective bids for hegemony from the 16th to the 20th century.

On a day-to-day basis the solid and lasting power arrangement has seemed, to the players involved, fragile and temporary. Frequent crises in Berlin, flareups in the outside world threatening to spill over into Europe, dramatic events in Prague and Budapest, inflammatory statements by leaders, disappointing stalemates at international conferences with ambitious purposes, nuclear terror and frightening weapons systems—all of these have heightened tensions as Armageddon has often been promised for tomorrow. The need for improvisation, attempts to fix short-term problems, has given the system the appearance of impermanence. The reality is that the system has served quite well for a relatively long time.¹⁶ It may be that new factors will disrupt this state of affairs, but we

have heard that before—often. Europeans will continue to view the world from different perspectives, but it is in the interest of Europeans and Americans to maintain both cooperation and the system that has evolved in Europe since 1945. The system may be the best bet for Europe and the United States because it serves the interests of so many states, particularly of those with the power to change things.

US SECURITY INTERESTS IN EUROPE

US interests and objectives in Western Europe guide our policy there. Leading a list of interests is the deterrence of war in Europe and the maintenance of stability where NATO and Warsaw Pact forces confront one another. Collaborative political, economic, and military relationships with Canada and Western European countries contribute to the realization of our principal aims. Minimizing Soviet influence and easing tension in Europe derive from these principal aims.

These security interests can be taken as a first premise and extended to a lengthy list of political and economic objectives. Suffice it to say that war should be deterred and stability maintained for one overarching political purpose: to protect and promote Western democratic principles and practices in order to insure a favorable environment for the survival of American values. We seek to promote economic conditions in Europe which provide a solid basis for the West's political, psychological, and military strength in order to insure the survival of those same American values. It is for these reasons that American soldiers have served continuously in Europe since World War II. The strategic challenge to the United States has remained constant: to be strong enough in Europe to assure that NATO could not be overwhelmed in the first weeks of a blitzkrieg war and to cope with contingencies around the globe. It is important that we keep our priorities in mind. Defense of Europe remains essential, and nowhere else does the local contribution to US efforts exist on such a scale.¹⁷ Given our domestic constraints which prevent a massive infusion of resources to defense in time of peace, we must make the most of allied contributions. To elicit greater efforts from allies we must demonstrate our continued determination to pay the price of leadership.

Europe's geopolitical significance and its great wealth are most often cited by strategists in terms of what Europe's loss would mean to the United States. Western Europe's integration into the Soviet sphere would be a shift of such magnitude that it would signal the victory of the East and the decline of the United States. For these reasons NATO Europe is a vital interest of the United States.

Insuring peace and stability in Western Europe while denying an extension of Soviet influence there contributes to world order as well. Indeed, the kind of stability that has evolved in Europe despite many crises since World War II would seem attractive to the United States in some of the more volatile regions of the world where local instability often threatens world order. Maintaining US credibility and influence in the region while preventing an outbreak of hostilities continues to be one of the key elements of US policy. A significant loss of US influence in Europe would adversely affect the US position around the world in real terms and psychologically. A diminished US role in Europe in the foreseeable future would almost inevitably signal weakness and decline as a world power.

The strategy of forward defense projects US power abroad to prevent isolation by sharing defense with allies and to fight, if necessary, where damage and destruction will not necessarily touch the United States. Declaring that the NATO countries and lines of communication between Europe and the United States are "vital" to the United States draws the line which an enemy cannot cross without risking a fight. That line includes areas thousands of miles from our shores. Forward basing of ground troops and sea and air forces in and around Europe signals our intent to friend and foe, enhancing both deterrence and the capability to defend US interests.

Order in Europe contributes to world order; disorder anywhere contributes to feelings of insecurity and unease. It is exceedingly difficult to document these assertions, to precisely explain the how and the why. Perhaps trading on the stock exchanges around the world illustrates this point: seemingly unrelated events in remote areas affect the confidence of investors in New York, London, and Tokyo. Psychological momentum has a force of its own in another way as well. Agreement on various issues is almost sanctified if the European nations, the United States, and Japan agree. It is in this sense that collective security—NATO—takes on a symbolic

significance that is more than the sum of its parts in contributing to world order. Security concerns interact with social, political, economic, and psychological factors creating a mood of either unease or well-being. The close association of the United States with Europe is a relationship which contributes to world order, because even the suggestion of disassociation would signify a change of great proportion, the creation of a vacuum begging to be filled.

CONSEQUENCES OF US TROOP REDUCTION IN EUROPE

Recent events outside of Europe require US military planners to review our strategic options. One outcome of the review has been the creation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). Need for such a force has been highlighted by our weakness in certain world regions in which we and our allies have important interests. Consideration is being given to the possible use of general purpose reinforcements currently planned for NATO to constitute a part of the RDJTF. There is an ironic touch to all of this. At a time which finds the Congress and the Reagan Administration kindly disposed to defense, and when voices advocating the reduction of US forces in Europe are muted, military planners are the ones forced to take a hard look at military deployment around the world. Those who have fought off domestic political pressures to diminish our presence in Europe find themselves scanning the European landscape for "assets." Hard military choices will be necessary.

Any decrease in US troop strength in Europe would require the allies to fill gaps created if the essential equilibrium in Europe is to be maintained. While planners may be able to share tasks among various allies, the main conventional ground combat tasks would fall to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The recent decision by the United Kingdom to buy Trident makes an expanded conventional force contribution by the British unlikely, even if military efforts in Northern Ireland should become unnecessary and British economic problems vanish overnight. It appears that the decision to spend billions of dollars for a strategic weapons system will inevitably diminish British general purpose forces.

There is no evidence that the French are prepared to depart from their policy of maintaining an independent military role. It is

probable that France will maintain its II Corps in the southwestern corner of the FRG and not, as much as we might wish it, forward, either to reduce the length of the FRG II Corps front or to assume part of the US VII Corps mission. Efforts to fully integrate French forces in NATO military planning, particularly in light of a reduced US troop presence, would continue, but success in these efforts is more a wish than a probability.

It is also unlikely that Benelux, Denmark, or Norway can provide a solution to the problem of filling gaps created by departing Americans in the Central Region. Marginal contributions to NATO's overall strength might be feasible, but to expect additional major troop units from the smaller allies is unrealistic. The expected admission of Spain to NATO is unlikely to produce a feasible alternative to forward US forces. The quality of the Spanish Army, the attitudes of the French and German governments, indeed the wisdom of investing Spanish assets outside of the western Mediterranean area, raise unanswered questions.

The only realistic alternative to US forces in the Central Region is the Bundeswehr. Political and psychological problems will attend any increase of German military capability, a fact which cannot be ignored. Memories of German militarism persist in Europe to an extent greater than Americans want to believe. These memories rule out a simple substitution of FRG NATO divisions for US divisions, even if other considerations did not dictate against this course of action. The FRG is keenly aware of neighbors' attitudes: suspicion in the East and ambivalence in the West. A drawdown of American troops in Europe would produce strong resistance from all members of the Alliance, particularly if associated with expansion of the Bundeswehr.

One can only speculate about the probable effect of unilateral US troop withdrawal on the Soviets, but it is difficult to imagine any way that it could work to our advantage or contribute to stability in Europe. American hesitation to use military force since the Vietnam experience—in Africa, in Afghanistan, in Iran, and in Cuba—could lead the Soviets to conclude that our will has failed us. It is unlikely that American force reduction in Europe will result in a Russian charge West. It is likely, however, that the Soviets would continue to exert political pressure on the West over time. Should Western Europeans conclude, with the Russians, that

American will has eroded, the inclination of Europeans would tend toward greater accommodation with an ascendant Russia.¹⁸ To good Marxist-Leninists everywhere there would be sufficient evidence that the capitalist system was, indeed, falling of its own weight as predicted over 100 years ago. The United States and the West would have proved that the internal contradictions of our system rendered us incapable of sustained competition with a superior system destined to reorder the world.

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

In broad outline the coming decade will be much like the past decade but more complex. Europe will remain a vital interest of the United States. NATO allies will be more assertive, a reflection of their self-confidence, diminished respect for US resolve and use of power,¹⁹ and hope that normalization in relations between East and West will be cultivated and bear fruit. As the small and medium states of Europe attempt to normalize East-West relations, they will keep an eye on the superpowers and hope that a return to confrontation politics can be avoided. The USSR will carefully watch the development of assertiveness in Eastern Europe. Detente may have stimulated omnipresent nationalistic tendencies in Eastern Europe to a point near the intolerable. Measuring gains against losses—disarray in the West and independent impulses in the East—could turn the USSR from the charade of detente to direct confrontation. Renewed American willingness to pay the price of defense could be another incentive to the Soviets to turn to confrontation while enjoying certain military advantages in the mid-1980's. It is unclear whether a waiting game or grabbing bold initiatives will be more appealing to Soviet leadership, itself shifting to a new generation of leaders in the 1980's. In either event, the United States must demonstrate the will which says that we intend to continue in our role as leader of the West.

Our allies in Europe need to be convinced that while we will remain strong in Europe, total defense requirements around the world demand that regional powers carry a fair share of the burden. This argument has thus far proved unconvincing in Europe. Vietnam was regarded as an American war, not a defense of Western interests. Afghanistan is regarded as an exotic place far from Europe, clearly not worth the poisoning of West European

relations with the USSR. We must nevertheless persist in our efforts to have Europe do more for its defense. The reduction of oil supplies resulting from turbulence in the Near East may force Europeans to recognize their interests beyond the white cliffs of Dover and the white peaks of the Urals. The 1980 Polish Crisis will stimulate European concern for defense, but it will also focus attention on Europe.

NATO was created to satisfy a need which still exists. As long as the need exists, as long as the security of Europe is second only to that of the United States itself in our strategic planning, it would not be in the national interest to dismantle an effective instrument of US policy until that policy changes. Policy without the means of implementation is posturing. Let us not posture in Europe.

The challenge to the United States in its efforts to establish world order in the 1980's will be the maintenance of equilibrium and stability in Europe, which probably means a need for US troop presence at the end of the decade more or less what it was at the beginning of the decade, while maintaining a strategic reserve with the means to get it where it is needed. The temptation to find that strategic reserve in Europe should be resisted. Strategic flexibility should not be bought at the price of risking stability in Europe.

ENDNOTES

1. Walter F. Hahn takes a very pessimistic view regarding European accommodation to the Soviet Union in his article, "Does NATO Have a Future?", (*International Security Review*, Summer, 1980, pages 151-172). He contends that the circumstantial variable of leaders' personalities combines with a progressive trend, which he calls the "confidence gap," and concludes that the temptation to come to terms with the Russians will become almost irresistible in Western Europe, particularly in Germany. It does injustice to Mr. Hahn's intelligently developed analysis, but summarized in briefest terms, he sees the Germans in their historical dilemma: should they tilt West, East, or attempt to round up the wagons against all comers? An ascendant Soviet Union and a United States unsure of itself might incline a prudent Germany to tilt East, to be more "reasonable" in accommodating the Russians. While European fears previously focused on American willingness "to go the entire route of escalation in the defense of Europe," they now focus on the American wherewithal for the nuclear guarantee of Europe. Realpolitik might cause the Germans—by degrees—to edge eastward.

Walter Laqueur ("Euro-Neutralism," *Commentary*, June 1980, pages 21-27) notes the same trend in Europe, the trend that seems to say "we are weak, we are dependent, we cannot afford heroic gestures" but he is less fatalistic than Hahn. Laqueur reminds us that "Europe has nowhere to go, and societies seldom accept voluntary satellization." He prescribes leadership: "America's task in Europe is twofold, to reassure the fainthearted and to stiffen the resolve of those who are prepared to stand straight."

2. *The New York Times*, "Army and Marines in Battle Over Command of Rapid Deployment Force," December 10, 1980, page 24.

3. William Safire in *The New York Times*, December 11, 1980, page A35.

4. *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1980, page B13.

5. George Ott, "The Case Against NATO," *The Washington Monthly*, December 1980, pages 34-36.

6. *Ibid.*, page 36.

7. Jean-Paul Pigasse, "The Case for a European Defense of Europe," *Strategic Review*, Fall 1980, pages 29-39.

8. *Euroshima*, Editions Media, Paris, France, 1979; reviewed in English in *Parameters*, March 1980, pages 99-100.

9. William L. Hauser, a retired Army colonel and military analyst of deserved good reputation, has indeed gone that far. "If we want worldwide capability, we are going to have to reduce our forces in Europe." *The New York Times*, February 27, 1981, p. A27.

10. For an excellent appreciation of the way Europe currently looks at the United States, the Third World, and itself, see: Edward A. Kolodziej, "European Perspectives on Europe's Roles in the World: The Partial Partner," *Rethinking US Security Policy For The 1980s*, National Defense University Press, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, pages 81-122.

11. *Ibid.*, page 122.

12. Jeffrey Record, "The Western Alliance, Japan and International Security Threats," *Rethinking US Security Policy For the 1980s*, pages 72-74.

13. Kolodziej, pages 95-110.

14. In *The New York Times*, "Labor Party Veers Emphatically to the Left," by R.W. Apple, Jr., October 3, 1980, p. A3, the following appeared:

A number of speakers denounced the United States, one of them calling it 'that country that has consistently meddled in the affairs of every other country.'

The conference rejected the strongest motion before it, one calling for withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But on a show of hands it backed resolutions committing the party to remove all British and American nuclear weapons from British soil and from British waters and 'opposing British participation in any defense policy based on the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons.'

15. A.W. DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. Mr. DePorte's thesis, summarized here, is that a divided Europe and two Germanies, one in each of the two great power blocs on the continent, is a happy solution to the search for stability in Europe. It has worked well, when one considers the history of Europe, a history of various nations attempting hegemony through centuries. Division reflects the power relationship as the US-led NATO faces the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. This sensible arrangement promises to reach out to the turn of the century.

16. As one writer put it, "...The most powerful unifying force in NATO was the constraining influence imposed by the absence of alternatives," Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Nato In the Second Generation," *NATO Review*, October 1980, page 4.

17. Most Europeans can produce impressive statistics when charged with refusal to carry their fair share of the NATO defense burden. The FRG *White Paper 1979 (The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Development of the Federal Armed Forces)*, pages 23-24, says that the European allies contribute 90% of the land forces and 80% of the combat aircraft fielded by NATO. The Bundeswehr provides 50% of the NATO land forces in Central Europe, 50% of the ground-based air defense resources and 30% of the combat aircraft.

Indeed, Robert Ball, writing in *Fortune*, ("Getting Our Friends to Flex Their Muscles," February 9, 1981, pages 60-65), makes the same point with even greater emphasis.

In the emotional debate about who's spending what, Americans rarely get a clear picture of what the Europeans are doing. The U.S. has 327,000 servicemen based in Europe and last year budgeted \$49 billion for those forces and for U.S.-based units that would reinforce NATO in case of war. By comparison, our allies had 2.5 million men and women in uniform and spent about \$100 billion maintaining NATO's defenses. On the crucial central front, the keystone of NATO's forces is the 500,000-man German Bundeswehr; French forces are almost as large, and even the Netherlands and Belgium have 115,000 and 88,000 men under arms, respectively. As U.S. General Bernard W. Rogers, the Supreme Commander of all NATO forces, said last year in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee: 'Were we to go to war in NATO tomorrow, 75% of the air forces, 80% of the naval forces, and 90% of the land forces initially committed to our forward defense would come from our European allies'.

Another way to assess the relative commitments is to measure the allies by the

agreed yardstick of a 3% real annual increase in defense spending. Taking an average of the last two years, the U.S. has raised outlays 3.6% annually and is planning bigger increases (see 'A Defense Budget for the 1980s', *Fortune*, January 26). In Europe three nations hit or exceeded the target—France (3%), Portugal (3.2%), and little Luxembourg (9.9%). Britain came close with 2.8%; Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Turkey all came in at 2.3%, Belgium at 2%, and Italy at 1.6%. Greece and Denmark lagged way behind, but Greece, which left NATO's defense-planning committee in 1974 in a huff over Cyprus, rejoined only last year.

Europeans prefer to look at the longer term. If you consider the past decade as a whole, the real rate of growth of defense spending in every NATO country except Portugal *exceeded* that of the U.S., which actually showed a decline. To the Europeans, this indicates that they have been consistently defense-minded while the U.S. has lurched through great surges in response to suddenly perceived challenges—the post-Sputnik 'missile gap', Vietnam, and now the fear that the men in Moscow will be tempted by their ability to knock out U.S. Minutemen Allied preparedness for a conventional war is better now than it was in the early fifties, before Germany joined NATO and rebuilt its armed forces, or in the sixties, when U.S. troops and supplies were drained off to Vietnam.

18. Walter Laqueur, writing in *The New York Times* ("Europe in the Woods," January 27, 1981, page A19), explains the "misunderstanding about the causes of the drift" in very basic terms. It is not a result of growing economic and political strength in Europe nor Western Europe's dependence upon trade with the Soviet Union. Nor is it US inconsistencies or lack of leadership. "Finally, it is not true that the demand for a 3% increase in defense spending caused all the bad blood in Europe." Europe sees things differently because of Europe's physical proximity to Soviet power, because geography cannot be rearranged, because they live in the woods with the bear. They believe that it is a mistake to anger the bear.

19. The matter-of-fact acceptance by Europeans of a changed power relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union is noteworthy. ". . . [the United States] needs the alliance more than before. The weakening of the United States does not alter the fact that it is the only major power in the alliance." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung fuer Deutschland*, April 11, 1981.

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